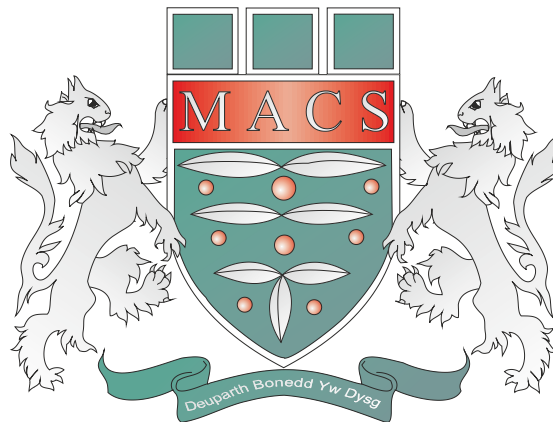


# Mountain Ash Comprehensive School



## Equality and Diversity Policy

Signed G. Thennia (Chair of Governors)

Date 11.11.2024

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document summarises Mountain Ash Comprehensive School's approach to equal opportunities. Its purpose is to make all employees, and the community as a whole, aware of the School's commitment to equality and diversity.

The School considers equality of opportunity to be of mainstream importance, taking its place equally within all school strategies, ideologies and principles.

The School wishes to promote equality of opportunity within the School for all existing and potential employees and for all those in our communities, regardless of gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

The School is committed to promoting equality and diversity in employment and in service delivery.

We aim to be a School that values and respects all employees, job applicants, customers, residents living in our area and visitors coming to the area. We believe that everyone living in and working in Rhondda Cynon Taf has the right to be treated fairly and to live free from discrimination.

We will work to ensure that everyone in our communities is able to access our services and information. We will consider people's different needs as we develop our services and practices and aim to ensure that our approach is inclusive of everyone.

As an employer we will work to promote a positive working life for all employees. We aim to create a workplace culture that is free from harassment and discrimination whereby people's differences are respected and valued, rather than just tolerated.

We aim to promote an environment within the school whereby we challenge prejudices, stereotypes and negative assumptions about people and groups of people.

We recognise that we are better able to serve our community if the diversity in our communities is reflected among our employees. We believe that our School is enriched by people's differences and we will work to ensure that this message is communicated throughout our community.



### **3. POLICY AIMS**

To achieve the aims of this policy we will promote equality of opportunity in employment and in service delivery. The policy is set out to show how we will promote equality in each of these areas. Our overall aim is to ensure that people within Mountain Ash Comprehensive School are treated fairly and with respect, that individual needs are recognised, and that we work to enable everyone to live without discrimination, harassment or prejudice.

### **4. EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT**

The School is committed to introducing wide-ranging policies and procedures to provide equality of opportunity for all existing and prospective employees.

The School operates a flexible working scheme to all posts where this is practicable and also operates a job share scheme. These schemes ensure that all employees with family or caring responsibilities are able to arrange their working hours to suit their needs.

Employees involved in delivering services will receive information or training on equality and diversity so that they understand they must not discriminate against any other person or group of people. Employees are also encouraged to take up equality courses available to them through the School. Staff will receive training so that they are aware of the standards expected of them in terms of equality and diversity.

The School is committed to ensuring fairness in its recruitment and selection procedures and ensures that all appointments are based on merit only. We work to ensure that minority groups are encouraged to apply for our vacancies so that as far as possible, the diversity in our communities is reflected in our workforce.

The School will promote equality of opportunity in employment by making sure all employees involved in recruitment are aware that:

- | No internal or external job applicant can receive less favourable treatment than another because of gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and during maternity leave.
- | They should not impose any conditions or requirements that unfairly affect applicants from one group more than applicants from another group.
- | Any qualifications, conditions or requirements applied to a job must be relevant and justifiable for the post.
- | Each individual is judged and assessed according to his or her capability of carrying out a given task.

- I An interview must be offered to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a post and reasonable adjustments must be made for disabled job applicants who require these for interview.

## **5. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

Examples of the practices and procedures the School proposes to implement to make sure it operates a fair employment policy are listed in this section.

### **(a) Job Descriptions**

These are examined before recruitment to any post to minimise any possibility of direct or indirect discrimination. They are written clearly and concisely to make sure they do not directly or indirectly discriminate.

The language on each job description is checked to ensure it is gender neutral and non discriminatory.

### **(b) Person Specifications**

These are prepared for all posts before the post can be advertised. Their aim is to identify the knowledge, experience, and competencies required to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post. Senior Directors/Leaders of Learning and/or the School Business Manager are expected to scrutinise them to make sure that the criteria being used are strictly essential and relevant to the post.

The person specification should not include any requirements that could be considered to be discriminatory. Any specification that could potentially be more difficult to fulfil for people belonging to one group as opposed to people belonging to another group, would be considered to be discriminatory.

Person specifications are updated each time a post becomes vacant to make sure that they continue to reflect the needs of the job..

The language on each job specification is checked to ensure it is gender neutral and non discriminatory.

All person specifications will also include reference to Welsh Language skills requirements.

### **(c) Advertising Vacancies**

The School recognises a need for the principle of wide advertising to make sure it obtains as many applications as possible especially from disadvantaged or minority groups.

Our vacancies are advertised through various online recruitment systems such as eTeach/Indeed and via the school website to encourage applications from a wide field, unless there is school restructuring and/or re-organisation.

**(d) Application Forms**

The School's job application forms are designed to make sure that no information is collected which is not essential to the job in question.

All applicants are asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the recruitment process so that we can check that we are encouraging applications from all sectors of the community. The HR panel of the Governing Body and/or the Senior Leadership team may monitor the progress of randomly selected posts. The School recognises the difficulties which minority groups face when competing for positions and is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all applicants.

**(e) Short-listing**

The School has identified the procedure for short listing in the Recruitment and Selection policy. This will be adhered to at all times. The short list should be based on the information contained in the application form related to the job description and the person specification. The same criteria should be consistently applied to all candidates.

Personal details, including name, age, gender etc. are detached from all application forms prior to being given for short-listing. Therefore, personal details are not used in the short-listing process (applications are anonymised). This ensures that only essential information is used for short listing, reducing the risk of discrimination occurring.

**(f) Selection Tests**

Selection tests will only be carried out by persons qualified and competent to do so.

As selection tests may be biased culturally or in some other way, they must be chosen carefully. The School will only use tests that relate to job requirements and measure an individual's actual or potential ability to perform or to train for a particular job or career. The Equality & Diversity Team should be contacted to check new selection tests to make sure they are not biased or potentially discriminatory.

**(g) Selection Criteria**

Research has proved that people can suffer disadvantage and discrimination in an interview when unrelated and irrelevant questions are



asked. To make sure there is no discrimination, the School expects all School representatives to observe the following selection practices:

- Not to ask questions at interview about a candidate's personal life including for example marital status, children, family arrangements, religion or belief, gender identity or sexual orientation. Interview questions must only be related to ability to carry out the duties of the post. Residential status will not be queried at interview but any appointee will be expected to provide proof of the right to work in this country in accordance with current legislation.
- Language preference can only be used as a selection criteria if there is a legitimate and justifiable job requirement or it is essential for job entry training, this can include Welsh under the duties placed on us by the current Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations.
- To make selection decisions only on the basis of the requirements of the job set out in the job description and the person specification.
- Not to ask candidates irrelevant questions which could be seen as directly or indirectly discriminatory, such as asking someone from a minority ethnic background questions to test their understanding of the customs of the United Kingdom.

**(h) Interviewing**

Interviews will be conducted by persons identified within the School's policy document on recruitment and selection of staff. The School will seek to provide training for potential interviewers. It is our objective to make sure only trained interviewers take part in the selection process.

When needed, reasonable adjustments will be made to help disabled people to participate fully in interviews. This could involve providing facilities to meet their needs or providing a full refund of expenses, including transport costs for accessible transport.

**(i) Welsh Language**

Employee's and prospective employee's language choice (Welsh or English) will be respected during each stage of the recruitment process. This will include the opportunity to complete an application form, receive correspondence and attend an interview conducted in, Welsh or English.

**(j) Promotion**

Any post which, on becoming vacant, represents a promotion opportunity for existing staff, will be advertised in accordance with paragraph (c).

**(k) Monitoring**

The School has introduced a system of regular employment monitoring covering existing employees and job applicants. Both internal and external applicants are requested to provide information on their ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, religion and age in order that we can monitor the effectiveness of the Equality & Diversity Policy.

We believe monitoring is essential so that we can:

- I Assess progress towards equality of opportunity, identify areas of concern and develop programmes of action where needed.
- I Check the extent to which progress has been made in achieving equality targets and National Performance indicators.

**(l) Job Sharing**

The School considers the suitability of posts for job sharing when they become vacant. This can be of particular benefit to people with childcare and other caring responsibilities and to disabled people. All vacancies are considered eligible for job share unless the Headteacher can show that this would not be justified for a specific post.

**(m) Technical Equipment and Adaptations**

The School will make reasonable adjustments to enable a successful disabled job applicant to carry out fully the duties of the post. This can include providing appropriate technical equipment and adaptations. Financial assistance towards the cost of technical equipment and adaptations is available from Jobcentre plus' Access to Work scheme.

**6. EQUALITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY**

The School will promote equality of opportunity to ensure that all members of the school community are able to access our services and understand that the School will not tolerate discrimination or harassment in our communities.

We will review our services regularly to make sure that they meet the needs of all members of the community.

A range of equality initiatives in service delivery will continue to be implemented as part of this policy. The initiatives include the following:

**a) Dealing with Hate Crime**

The School will not tolerate harassment of its employees or service users whilst accessing our services. Some harassment may constitute hate crime if it is on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. Hate Crime Awareness training is available to staff so that they are aware of the steps they need to take if they have experienced or witnessed hate crime.

**b) Consultation with the Community**

The School seeks to ensure that the views of the school community are sought when developing School strategies, policies and procedures.

The School accepts that people in minority groups are, and always have been, under-represented in decision making processes and acknowledges that the best way of providing services which reflect the needs of a minority group is to consult with members of the group directly. Staff will be encouraged to seek the views of people from minority groups when setting up consultative mechanisms.

**c) Accessibility**

The School has worked with the LA made improvements to the school site to ensure that it is accessible to disabled people. Work will continue in this area.

The School will ensure that as far as possible, only accessible buildings are used for meetings and events and that access requirements for such meetings and events are always given consideration.

The School recognises and supports the social model of disability. As a result, the School is committed to removing the barriers that disabled people face in society, including those that prevent people from accessing our services or working within the authority. T

**d) Language and translation**

Information is provided in accessible formats where this is required, so that all needs are recognised e.g. the needs of visually impaired people, hearing impaired people, people with learning difficulties and people whose first language is not English.

Where practicable the School will provide interpreters for customers who use languages other than English - including Welsh, British Sign Language and minority languages.

When necessary we will translate documents into languages other than Welsh or English and will produce documents in accessible formats such as large print, Braille or audiotape for blind and visually impaired people.

**e) Complaints Procedures**

Any customer or service user who feels they have been treated unfairly by a School employee because of their gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age can make an official complaint. Their complaint will be thoroughly investigated as set down in the School's complaints procedure. A person's language choice will be respected during this process. Persons are free to make representations/respond in Welsh if they wish to do so.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITY AS AN EMPLOYER - GENERAL APPROACH**

To make sure we are able to fulfil the aims of this policy, the School has made the following commitments:

- | To provide the necessary resources, wherever practicable, to plan, implement and monitor equality policies and strategies.
- | To promote equality of opportunity for all people.
- | To consult regularly with trades unions on the content and implementation of the policy.
- | To make sure that the policy is known to all employees.
  
- | To provide suitable training and guidance to staff (especially senior management), to make sure they understand their duties under the law and under the School's Equality & Diversity Policy.
- | To regularly review existing policies and procedures and to change them where they are found to be actually or potentially discriminatory.
- | To monitor the existing workforce and job applicants by ethnic origin, gender, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion to evaluate the progress of the policy.
- | To ensure that all information relevant to the policy is open for public scrutiny.
- | To take disciplinary action in accordance with the School's procedures against any employee who is found to have breached the School's Equality & Diversity Policy or any future Codes of Practice that will be implemented.

## **8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES**

The School as an employer accepts that it has a major responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity. At the same time it expects its employees to also recognise their responsibilities.

The School places the following responsibilities on individual employees:

- └ To not unlawfully discriminate, or induce or attempt to induce others to unlawfully discriminate
- └ To adhere to the School's Equality & Diversity Policy and refrain from using discriminatory language or displaying discriminatory behaviour at work.
- └ To report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices to an appropriate Senior Leader within the School.
- └ To refrain from harassing, abusing or intimidating colleagues on the grounds of gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age. Where this is found to occur, employees may be liable to disciplinary action.
- └ To work with the School in promoting equality of opportunity at work.
- └ To not victimise individuals because they have made complaints or provided information on harassment or discrimination on the grounds of gender, gender identity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age.
- └ To seek guidance from senior managers or RCT's Equality & Diversity Team where they are in any doubt as to the legality of procedures or actions. The need to seek guidance also applies where an employee is instructed by an immediate supervisor to take action, which the employee believes, may be discriminatory.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

This policy will be overseen by the Headteacher and the School's Governing Body and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

If you need to discuss any problem arising from alleged or suspected harassment or discrimination, or wish for more detailed information about equality and diversity or how the School's Equality & Diversity Policy should be implemented, please contact the Equality & Diversity Team, Human Resources, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, CF40 2XX, Tel: (01443) 424075.